The under-utilisation of funds by the Coffee Board was due to problems faced by the coffee growers during the years 2002-03 and 2003-04 owing to the lower prices of coffee in both domestic and international markets, compounded by the adverse weather conditions. As the growers were not in a position to contribute the required share, they could not avail all the benefits extended under the Tenth Plan Scheme, which resulted in under-utilisation of funds. To bailout the growers a Coffee Relief Package was announced besides implementation of the Plan Schemes. As a result of the package and also due to the improved prices of coffee in both domestic and international markets, the growers are now in a better position compared to the years 2002-03 and 2003-04.

(d) The proposed allocation of funds during XI Plan for the Commodity Boards are given below:

(i) Tea Board : Rs.1000 crore (ii) Coffee Board : Rs. 750 crore

(iii) Rubber Board : Rs. 660.13 crore (iv) Spices Board : Rs. 350.04 crore

(v) APEDA : Rs. 750.00 crore (vi) MPEDA : Rs. 500.00 crore

Effect of big MNCs like Wal-Mart on retail market

1697. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the names of big businessmen and other foreign partners who have decided to set up retail stores in the country;

(b) what would be the total investment by these industrial houses in retail sector;

(c) whether Government are aware that Wal-Mart Company which has driven out thousands of local businessman in U.S. and other countries is forcing its entry into the retail market through back door;

(d) if so, the details thereof including the number of small stores proposed to be set up by that company; and

(e) in what manner Government propose to protect the small traders who are likely to be uprooted consequent upon the setting up of retail trade centres by multinationals like Wal-Mart?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) As per extant policy, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is not permitted in Retail trade except in Single Brand product retailing. The approvals granted for FDI in Single Brand product retailing is given in the Statement [Refer to the Statement Appended to the Answer to USq 1677 Part (a) to (c)].

(b) As per data available with Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, foreign investment approved for Single Brand Retail from February, 2006 to May, 2007 was US$ 3.31 million. Information on domestic capital investment in the retail trade is not centrally maintained.

(c) and (d) As per information received, a joint venture company has been formed with equal partnership between M/s Bharti Enterprises and Wal-Mart for setting up a wholesale cash and carry operations in select cities in India over a period of time to serve the requirements of business customers. This arrangement is in conformity with the extant FDI policy. An agreement has also been signed between the two parties for availing technical know-how and training to Bharti's retail venture which would be entirely owned by the Bharti Group.

(e) Government has not received any proposal from Wal-Mart for investment in retail trading.

Proposal for virtual special economic zone for handloom clusters in M.P.

† 1698. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Madhya Pradesh has sent any proposal to the Central Government regarding setting up of virtual Special Economic Zones of the handloom clusters;

(b) whether Government have given their approval for this proposal after considering the same; and

(c) if not by when Government would express their reaction on these proposal together with the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) There is no concept of virtual Special Economic Zones and therefore, no such proposal can be considered.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Providing benefits to exporters affected by rise in value of rupee

1699. DR. V. MAITREYAN:
SHRI C. PERUMAL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken to provide better benefits to exporters due to the improvement of rupee against US dollar;

(b) whether it is a fact that the rupee is on a regular upward trend against dollar in the recent past;

(c) what is the total loss due to this trend for exporters in terms of rupee;

(d) what immediate steps are being considered to give better benefits to export community; and

(e) by when it is likely to be implemented?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.